

## City of Minneapolis Request for Qualifications

### Designation of the Community Action Agency for the City of Minneapolis

Applicant: Community Action Partnership of Suburban Hennepin

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## I. Executive Summary

Community Action Partnership of Suburban Hennepin (CAPSH) is the state and federally certified community action agency for suburban Hennepin County. By this response to the City of Minneapolis' RFQ, CAPSH is proposing to serve as the designated community action agency for all of Hennepin County.

CAPSH has been the designated community action agency for suburban Hennepin County since 1986. It currently serves the 44 communities of suburban Hennepin County and provides select services within the City of Minneapolis, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application assistance, Nutrition Education, Legal Services Clinics and the Energy Assistance Program (EAP). EAP is managed in close coordination with the Weatherization Assistance Program operated by Sustainable Resources Center (SRC) throughout Hennepin County. CAPSH and SRC have coordinated these programs in suburban Hennepin County since 1997, and are now providing these services in all of Hennepin County. During the 2014 Program Year, CAPSH programs touched the lives of over 90,000 people.

CAPSH has adopted the Six National Goals for Community Action:

- Goal 1. - Low-income people become more self-sufficient. (Family)
- Goal 2. - The conditions in which low-income people live are improved. (Community)
- Goal 3. - Low-income people own a stake in their community. (Community)
- Goal 4. - Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved. (Agency)
- Goal 5. - Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results. (Agency)
- Goal 6. - Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential. (Family)

CAPSH programs and services, in conjunction with those of our collaborative partners, help increase the self-sufficiency of our clients and strengthen communities of suburban Hennepin County; CAPSH believes it can do the same for Minneapolis residents through a single, unified community action agency. The CAPSH Board and management team have the capacity and flexibility to develop and implement programs that will benefit Hennepin County residents as a whole and to implement services tailored to the needs of each community. CAPSH has the expertise to financially administer a unified community action agency and has the technological capability to handle client information.

With the award of Minnesota Community Action Grant (MCAG) funding to provide services in Minneapolis during the next year, CAPSH has begun to develop an organizational framework to meet the needs of both the current and new service areas. If awarded the community action agency designation for Minneapolis, the CAPSH Board will appoint a Transition Team, comprised of CAPSH Board and management, Minneapolis City officials, MN Department of Human Services - Office of Economic Opportunity (DHS-OEO) staff and Minneapolis non-profit and public education representatives. During this process, CAPSH will continue to provide quality services to all Hennepin County residents, and as appropriate, expand current programs into Minneapolis or develop new programs to meet identified needs. The recent expansion of the Energy Assistance Program has demonstrated that CAPSH has the ability to grow and adapt while continuing to meet the needs of the communities it serves. CAPSH has the expertise, experience and capacity to successfully serve as the designated community action agency for the City of Minneapolis.

## **2. Entity's Eligibility as a Community Action Agency**

Community Action Partnership of Suburban Hennepin is the state and federally designated community action agency serving suburban Hennepin County. CAPSH has been the designated community action agency for suburban Hennepin County since 1986. CAPSH is proposing to serve as the designated community action agency for all of Hennepin County

## **3. Experience and Capacity**

### **A) Proposed mission statement.**

To improve the quality of life in Hennepin County by creating and supporting links between individuals and communities through service, education and collaboration.

### **B) Statement that describes the proposed area to be served and, if different from the current service area discuss the reasons for the difference.**

CAPSH proposes to serve as the designated community action agency for Hennepin County, Minnesota. Currently, CAPSH is designated as the community action agency for the 44 communities that comprise suburban Hennepin County.

While it is the designated community action agency for suburban Hennepin, CAPSH is the designated EAP Service Provider for all of Hennepin County through a contract with the Minnesota Department of Commerce. In addition, CAPSH provides SNAP outreach and application assistance to Minneapolis residents through a grant from the DHS-OEO. These grants were reassigned to CAPSH after the decertification of Community Action of Minneapolis. In addition to these grants, CAPSH has been awarded MCAG funds by DHS-OEO to expand services to Minneapolis residents during the next year.

### **C) Experience and capacity in working with and advocating for low-income, multi-lingual and culturally diverse populations in planning and service delivery.**

As a community action agency, CAPSH has served low-income and underrepresented residents of suburban Hennepin County throughout its 30 year history. As poverty has grown in suburban Hennepin County, the demographics of the population have changed as well. Over the years, CAPSH has responded by expanding or developing new capacities to meet the changing needs of the clients it serves. One of the primary ways this is demonstrated is through hiring staff that represent these communities. For example, CAPSH serves clients that speak over 80 languages at home. In order to better serve these households and to assure that programs are designed to meet not just the language, but the cultural needs of clients, CAPSH has effectively recruited staff from Somali, Latino, Russian and Hmong-speaking communities.

All CAPSH offices are ADA accessible. CAPSH offers evening hours and staff work weekend hours to accommodate client needs. Some workshops provide childcare and food in order to assure that no barriers exist for interested clients to participate. EAP has made specific program delivery changes with the purpose of reducing barriers to the program. The EAP Case Management Department was created to assist households that have language, cultural, cognitive or other obstacles that prohibit them from

completing their application. As a result, the number of applications denied due to lack of information has been reduced by 50 percent.

CAPSH also made changes to its Asset Development and Homebuyer Programs. In recognition of Minnesota's low rates of homeownership and wealth accumulation among communities of color, CAPSH recently recruited two counselors to better serve historically underrepresented communities. The CAPSH goal is not only to provide home purchase and asset development counseling services, but also develop programs and services to more effectively meet the needs of those communities.

Assuring that language needs of clients are met in program implementation is as important as assuring that outreach activities reflect the diverse communities CAPSH serves. CAPSH Community Outreach activities specifically focus on engaging low-income communities, multi-lingual and multi-cultural communities. One of the primary ways that CAPSH meets this goal is by having staff lead outreach activities within their communities. CAPSH staff design outreach activities and materials for diverse communities throughout Hennepin County. One example of this is in CAPSH SNAP Outreach efforts. CAPSH specifically hired multi-lingual staff after realizing that specific underserved communities were not accessing the program as a result of mistrust. CAPSH Outreach staff now include Somali and Spanish speaking staff who work across all of Hennepin County, with a primary focus on working with those communities to increase awareness and access to this program.

**D) Assurance of compliance with Minn. Stat. §§ 256E to 256E.32 including requirements for the composition of the Entity's existing or proposed tripartite board of directors. If the Entity's current board does not meet the statutory provision, please explain how the Entity will change its Board to comply.**

The CAPSH Board of Directors complies with the tripartite board of directors requirements as mandated by Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 256E. CAPSH has been operating under these requirements since its designation as the suburban Hennepin County community action agency in 1986.

The current CAPSH Board of Directors is comprised of 18 members: six (6) each from the public, private and community (consumer) sectors. Public sector members include three Hennepin County Commissioners (designees) and three local public officials who are selected by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners. Community (Consumer) sector members, in accordance with statutory requirements and CAPSH Bylaws, are elected to the CAPSH Board by that sector.

**E) Experience in applying for and administering federal, state, local or private sector grants.**

CAPSH currently administers nearly 40 public and private grants to provide a variety of services, resources and opportunities to clients. These include public grants at all levels of government and private sector grants from corporations and foundations. A complete list of federal grants can be found in the CAPSH audit report. Funding includes both federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and state MCAG dollars, both of which are targeted primarily to community action agencies.

CAPSH is periodically monitored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Minnesota Departments of Commerce and Human Services, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and

Hennepin County. CAPSH has consistently had positive monitoring and performance reviews as well as “no findings” audits.

**F) Experience with coordination, partnership and linkages with other entities addressing poverty.**

CAPSH is only able to offer its array and flexibility of services to clients because of the partnerships and links it has with other organizations and agencies. CAPSH is constantly seeking out new partnerships or collaborative efforts. These efforts may result in new program ideas or funding opportunities, or may enable CAPSH and its partners to strengthen existing services. Three examples of this:

- After becoming the Minneapolis EAP Service Provider, CAPSH established a client service office at Minneapolis Urban League (MUL) in North Minneapolis. With this new partnership, CAPSH began offering a monthly Legal Clinic at the site, which in turn provided further outreach and referral opportunities for CAPSH and its partners. CAPSH Legal Clinic partner, Volunteer Lawyers Network (VLN), identified a need for criminal expungement legal advice. Upon establishment of a VLN monthly criminal expungement workshop at MUL, CAPSH added a second monthly Legal Clinic to coincide. In addition to addressing critical needs, CAPSH, VLN and MUL are able to conduct outreach for other programs that enable clients to achieve self-sufficiency.
- CAPSH maintains a partnership with Urban Ventures, where it provides Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) representation and application assistance (and other services). Through this partnership, CAPSH and *Siempre Padres* are generating a joint asset-development program (IDA program) that will be offered in Spanish.
- CAPSH currently offers a Tenant Training workshop to clients in its homeless transition program. As a result of conversations with staff from the City of Minneapolis, Minneapolis Public Schools, the Minneapolis Police Department and Minneapolis Regulatory Services, CAPSH is working to expand this workshop in Minneapolis. Along with increasing the number of workshops offered, CAPSH intends to offer the class to specific communities and in other languages. CAPSH recently was invited to participate in Tenant Engagement framework discussions hosted by Minneapolis Regulatory Services.

CAPSH currently identifies nearly 300 organizations with which it works to deliver services. These include:

- School districts, school programs and post-secondary institutions of learning;
- Faith-based organizations;
- Local, state and federal governments and libraries;
- Housing, homeless food security consortiums;
- Financial institutions and other for-profit businesses;
- State-wide and national associations and collaborations;
- Family Services Collaboratives;
- Hennepin County Libraries.

In Minneapolis, CAPSH works with Minneapolis Public Schools, Parents in Community Action (PICA), Appetite for Change, Urban Ventures, Minneapolis Urban League, Sabathani Community Center, Lutheran Social Services, Minneapolis Community and Technical College and Project for Pride in Living. CAPSH also works closely with Hennepin County for housing-related programs.

CAPSH Community Development department supports the development of non-profits that are being started by, or which are intended to benefit, low-income people. CAPSH provides technical assistance to these organizations, offering everything from fiscal agency and corporate filings to Board training and program development.

**G) Process to develop a transition plan and major elements of the plan.**

If CAPSH is designated as the community action agency for the City of Minneapolis, the agency will take the following actions as part of a transition plan:

- 1) Develop a Preliminary CSGB/MCAG Work Plan: CAPSH staff will prepare a Work Plan and budget based on DHS-OEO funding projections, including anticipated staffing, space and technology needs. This will be presented to the CAPSH Board of Directors.
- 2) Prepare and File Articles of Incorporation Amendments: CAPSH will prepare and file amendments as needed. Amending the Articles of Incorporation will require approval from the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners for changes in the current structure of the Board and appointing authority.
- 3) Revise Bylaws: CAPSH will make changes to the bylaws to reflect the new governance structure.
- 4) Establish a Transition Team: A Transition Team will be established by the Board upon designation. The team will be comprised of CAPSH Board and management staff, Minneapolis City officials, DHS-OEO staff and Minneapolis non-profit and public education representatives. The Transition Team will meet regularly for the first three months of the transition, and at least quarterly during the first two years, to review progress and recommend changes to the CAPSH Board of Directors.
- 5) Conduct a Preliminary Community Needs Assessment: CAPSH will seek and obtain input from key stakeholders for provision of services to Minneapolis residents. Stakeholder groups include:
  - Clients – low-income and historically underrepresented communities;
  - City of Minneapolis – public officials and staff;
  - Hennepin County – public officials and staff;
  - Social services providers – current and potential partners;
  - Minneapolis Public Schools – key staff;
  - CAPSH – board, staff, current partners;
  - Faith-based organizations – leaders, staff, representatives.
- 6) Increase Presence in City of Minneapolis:
  - Expand services at Sabathani Community Center and Minneapolis Urban League offices;
  - Consider additional client service locations.
- 7) Conduct Outreach:

- Build on existing EAP advertising platforms;
- Build on existing community partnerships;
- Establish new community partnerships;
- Leverage the strength of Minneapolis Neighborhood Associations;
- Intensify elected official outreach.

**H) Experience in planning including assessment of community needs, strategic planning and evaluation.**

In compliance with state and federal requirements, CAPSH conducts community needs assessments every three years (last one was completed in 2014; next one will be completed in 2017 except as noted in this application). Strategic planning follows the community needs assessment to ensure that the organizational mission and programming align with identified needs. Management continuously monitors and evaluates program performance and client satisfaction. The majority of programs are formally reviewed at least quarterly. The CAPSH Board of Directors receives reports at its regular Board meetings and annually conducts an overall review of agency operations and program delivery.

The CAPSH Board of Directors recently began its strategic planning process based on the 2014 community needs assessment. If CAPSH is designated as the community action agency for the City of Minneapolis, the Board will incorporate the results of the preliminary Minneapolis community needs assessment into its strategic planning to ensure services are meeting the needs of all Hennepin County communities.

**I) Experience with performance management, Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) or another system for measuring performance and results.**

CAPSH utilizes Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) processes to facilitate community needs assessment, strategic planning and program evaluation activities. ROMA logic models enable the agency to assess the need for services and to identify outcomes to be achieved. Programs and outcomes are measured against the agency's mission and the Six National Goals which have been adopted by community action agencies in general, and CAPSH in particular.

CAPSH is fortunate to have on staff two of the four certified ROMA trainers in Minnesota, one of whom has significant experience in both training and implementing ROMA concepts and processes. CAPSH has been a leader in incorporating ROMA concepts in its planning, performance review and evaluation processes since 2005.

New directors and staff receive orientation on ROMA concepts and their place in CAPSH operations. Both the Board of Directors and staff receive at least annual training on ROMA and its integration into evaluation, planning and reporting.

**J) Experience in working with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the Minnesota Department of Commerce, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Minnesota Housing, the Minnesota Department of Revenue and the Minnesota Department of Education, in providing services to clients.**

CAPSH has extensive experience working with the Minnesota Departments of Human Services, Commerce, Revenue and the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, having long-standing contractual relationships with each. CAPSH has developed good working relationships with these agencies and has consistently received positive monitoring reviews.

CAPSH works with the Minnesota Departments of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and Education indirectly, most often through partnerships or collaborations. For instance, CAPSH has HIRED personnel on site in its St. Louis Park office. HIRED is a non-profit workforce training and skill enhancement service provider that contracts directly with DEED.

**K) Capacity to implement the organizational standards as adopted by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, as outlined in Informational Memorandum 138.**

CAPSH participated in the development of the federal Organizational Standards adopted by DHS-OEO. In anticipation of the Organizational Standards becoming mandatory, CAPSH has conducted an internal review of the agency and will have the Standards fully implemented by October 1, 2015.

<p><b>4. Planning and Programming in Minneapolis. Describe how the Entity will transition to working in the Minneapolis service area by responding to the following questions.</b></p>
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**A) Ensure, if a Community Action Agency, that Minnesota Community Action Grant and federal Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds currently allocated to the Minneapolis service area are expended in Minneapolis.**

CAPSH is administering MCAG funds that were appropriated for the City of Minneapolis. These funds are identified in the CAPSH financial management system (Abilia, formerly MIP) and are tracked using fund accounting methods to ensure that they are expended on activities related to Minneapolis programming and clients only. CAPSH utilizes a client management system (CAP60) that can identify clients who receive services from funds designated for Minneapolis residents. Invoicing and reports for these grants will be prepared by comparing records from the financial and client management systems, ensuring that only Minneapolis residents received services with these funds.

CAPSH provides programming and services to Minneapolis residents at offices in the City of Minneapolis – at Sabathani Community Center and Minneapolis Urban League. The agency also conducts outreach and provides other services at various locations in or near Minneapolis (e.g. Urban Ventures, Lutheran Social Services, Little Earth of United Tribes, Hennepin County hubs). Staff time is tracked by program, which can be modified to include a location designation. The existing client and financial management systems are able to identify clients and funds by location.

**B) Modify its board of directors to reflect the stakeholders in the Minneapolis service area.**

CAPSH goal will be to assure that the Board reflects the geographic composition of the people and the communities it serves. To reflect the stakeholders in the Minneapolis service area, the CAPSH Board of Directors proposes to reorganize as follows:

- The size of the Board of Directors will be increased to 21;

- Public, private and community (consumer) sectors will each have seven members;
- Public sector members will be represented by three Hennepin County Commissioners or their designees, and four local elected officials from geographically representative areas of Minneapolis and suburban Hennepin County according to the CAPSH bylaws;
- 1/3 of the Board will represent residents of the City of Minneapolis;
- 2/3 of the Board will represent residents of suburban Hennepin County;
- All Board members will represent the low-income residents of Hennepin County.

The CAPSH Board of Directors has approved the above proposal, though it will require a change to CAPSH bylaws to implement.

**C) Allocate existing community action funding available in 2016-2017 and subsequent years for Minneapolis to the Minneapolis service area.**

Any funds received from future grants that are specified for the benefit of Minneapolis residents will be identified as such and will be administered in accordance with the protocols stated in section 4(A) above.

**D) Ensure maximum feasible participation and provide specific opportunities for involvement of low income persons in the local planning process, the annual work plan and the evaluation process of community action programs.**

CAPSH conducts community needs assessments every three years, in accordance with state and federal community action agency requirements. If CAPSH is designated as the community action agency for the City of Minneapolis, CAPSH will conduct a preliminary needs assessment to determine the unique needs of Minneapolis residents, identify the role CAPSH can play to deliver services and programs, and identify new partnership opportunities. As CAPSH conducts its next triennial community needs assessment in 2017, Minneapolis residents, service providers and public officials will be integral. CAPSH will conduct an analysis of data which will identify Minneapolis respondents to determine the particular needs (and specific service needs) of Minneapolis.

CAPSH currently reviews and analyzes assessment data for suburban Hennepin County to determine the unique and unmet needs of its different communities – including northwest, west and southwest regions of the County. One result has been to change the focus or targeting of different client groups as appropriate (e.g. partnering and providing services in Somali or Spanish for areas where there are concentrations of Somali- or Spanish-speakers).

CAPSH will be implementing an open work plan review process through which clients will have the opportunity to review and comment on the biennial work plan. CAPSH will conduct listening sessions throughout Hennepin County to elicit comments and recommendations. While CAPSH will target and provide notice to current clients (thus assuring involvement of low-income persons), public notice of these sessions will be made through the CAPSH website and other targeted communication.

**E) Hire staff to administer and implement programs in the Minneapolis service area. Describe if preference to Minneapolis service area residents and former Minneapolis Community Action Agency employees will be included in the planning and programming in Minneapolis.**

As a result of the preliminary needs assessment, CAPSH will determine which current programs should be expanded to Minneapolis and identify new programs to develop. As part of this process, a workflow analysis will be conducted to determine how many staff will be needed to implement and administer programs in the Minneapolis service area.

CAPSH is committed to hiring staff that reflect the communities it serves. Due to its proximity, the CAPSH workforce has always included Minneapolis residents. As it implemented the Energy Assistance Program for Minneapolis, CAPSH interviewed and hired several staff who had been previously employed by Community Action of Minneapolis (CAM).

Regardless of the community action designation, CAPSH will continue to recruit and hire residents throughout the Twin Cities area. Former CAM employees will continue to be notified of job postings and offered positions if they meet established job criteria.

**F) Identify strategic partners and how they will work with the Entity.**

- Hennepin County Commissioners – Working directly or through designees, commissioners are able to provide a County-wide perspective on poverty, demographics and needs identification. Commissioners or their designees may serve on the CAPSH Board of Directors and serve as a resource as CAPSH develops and implements programs as part of a Minneapolis designation.
- Local Elected Officials – These officials provide a local perspective, assuring that the needs of specific geographic areas and communities are met. Local elected officials may hold Board positions or participate in community needs assessment.
- MN Department of Human Services, Office of Economic Opportunity – Staff from DHS – OEO can provide technical assistance to ensure that state and federal certification requirements are met and that agency operations are conducted in accordance with legal requirements. CAPSH may request technical assistance from DHS – OEO and engage the Department in Board and staff training as needed.
- Representatives of social service organizations and organizations that work with different racial, ethnic and religious communities – CAPSH will engage various groups and organizations to ensure that services are delivered in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways and that services are meeting the needs of these communities. These community members may hold Board positions.
- Representatives of School Districts – School districts play an integral role in identifying service gaps, reaching out to low-income families and collaborating to meet their needs. CAPSH partners with schools to provide information to children and their families regarding available services and provides technical training to staff (particularly social workers) on services, eligibility requirements and how to access services on behalf of students and/or their families.

**G) Coordination of services with the Minneapolis Promise Zone.**

CAPSH has been meeting with representatives of Minneapolis Public Schools, PICA (Head Start) and other local officials to identify and develop programming to meet the needs of Minneapolis children and their families, in particular households of color and those with limited English proficiency. CAPSH also works with several provider groups whose services span Hennepin County.

CAPSH will work with Minneapolis Promise Zone partners involved with improving educational and other outcomes for North Minneapolis residents. CAPSH will work with partners to identify unmet needs in the Promise Zone initiative and provide guidance for the role it can play. CAPSH will also solicit guidance from clients to provide an additional layer of input regarding what role it can play within the initiative. CAPSH will develop services, in line with its mission and contingent on funding, to meet identified roles and goals.

CAPSH currently has an office in the Minneapolis Promise Zone, at Minneapolis Urban League, where it delivers EAP and SNAP Outreach/Application Assistance. CAPSH also conducts a monthly Legal Clinic at the Urban League office and is adding another, all-day Legal Clinic to provide expansion of its expungement assistance program.

**H) Leverage state and federal block grant funds to provide needed services to low income residents.**

CAPSH successfully uses CSBG and MCAG funds to leverage other government and private grants to benefit the low-income clients it serves. Currently CSBG and MCAG account for approximately one-third of the agency operating revenue. The remaining two-thirds of the revenue are funds received in support of the agency's mission, programs and initiatives. CAPSH anticipates similar success in leveraging funds received to serve Minneapolis residents, either in particular (e.g. there is potential to leverage funds to increase resources for Promise Zone activities) or generally, for services throughout Hennepin County.

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**Included Documents:**

- A. Evidence of incorporation or proposed efforts towards incorporation, if applicable.
- B. Evidence of tax exempt status or proposed efforts towards achieving tax exempt status.
- C. Copy of the most recent audit and management letter and annual report, if available.
- D. Copy of the most recent organization chart.
- E. Copy of the most recent budget.
- F. Number of employees by title and status (full-time, part-time, volunteer).